

Edward Livingston to Andrew Jackson, June 23, 1834, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

EDWARD LIVINGSTON TO JACKSON.1

1 Livingston had been appointed minister to France May 29, 1833.

Private

Paris, June 23, 1834.

My Dear General, I hurried from London three days after my arrival there, (during one of which, I had a severe return of my fever,) and hastened here in the expectation that I might have met some instructions in relation to our affairs with this Country. The packet of the 16th May, arrived without any, and that of the 24th is not yet in, but papers by the way of Liverpool of that date have been received which do not announce any message to Congress on the Subject. this leaves me apprehensive that even when the expected packet shall arrive I may not be informed of your intentions. I hope however that I have not yet done any thing that may counteract them. I am not yet informed whether my despatches announcing the vote of the Chamber have been received; yet I took every precaution to have them speedily and safely Delivered and if no accident happened to them, they ought to have been at the Department eight days before the packet of the 16th sailed. Much anxiety was shown by influential people here, some weeks ago to know how the refusal would be taken at Washington, and I learned from a source which I am inclined to believe correct that a gentleman who was immediately after the Vote spoken of as Envoy Extraordinary to make explanations, had been requested to hold himself in readiness to depart for Washington in that Capacity if the tone assumed on the measures

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proposed then should make it necessary. The manner however in which the affair is noticed in our papers and the very slight sensation it seems to have excited, has produced a bad effect, and the idea of new negotiation to produce a smaller indemnity is gaining ground. Nothing will counteract it but the dread of restrictions on the admission of their silks and other articles of commerce. Yet the King whom I saw at the palace of Neuilly the night before last and one of the ministers spoke with the same assurances of fidelity to their engagements which they had before done. The result of the elections now going on will I have little doubt enable them to fulfill those engagements. But unfortunately no decision can be had in time to arrive before the end of the next session of Congress. It is therefore among other reasons why I have always been solicitous that a law should be passed suspending importations, until you should receive satisfactory evidence that the treaty has been complied with. this can not injure us; for we take nothing from France that we can not do without, and whatever we send, is indispensable for their manufactures, they will not for their own sakes interdict our exports, or if they do they must get the articles from us circuitously at a higher price. The measure is not one of hostility, it will secure to us the whole manufacturing and mercantile and a great portion of the agricultural interests, and it will probably bring about an earlier meeting of the New Chambers than is now contemplated. . . . 2

2 In a letter to Jackson of July 14, 1834, Livingston said: "I am waiting with great solicitude to know in what tone I shall be authorised to speak to the French Government on the subject of their breach of faith. the packet of the 16. June brought me nothing from which I could infer what would be the measures proposed. If it should be decided to do nothing, altho I should regret it very much yet if I knew it we might at least claim the merit of moderation and forbearance."

Every effort is making to discredit our institutions here and chiefly in the Governments calling themselves liberal when the progress to a really free form of Government is considered as the greatest of evils because the most imminent and the most destructive of the monopoly of power now possessed by the very few who have usurped it, and keep

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the great mass of the nation without any share in the management of its affairs. this is particularly the case in France, Where there is little personal security, and no political influence for more than 30 millions of the 32 composing its population, yet the Yoke is so firmly fixed that I see no probability of its being shaken off. Yet they fear our example and seize on every occasion to represent our Government as on the point of Dissolution, reprinting both in France and England, extracts from the nullifying and bank presses, to prove the fact. But they have not yet injured our credit and I was assured when lately at Amsterdam that if we wanted an hundred millions it could be procured at that place alone and in a day, on lower terms than it would [be] furnished to any other nation. . . .